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GYRE

DABNEY LANCASTER L. DEANEY
LONGWOOD COLLEGE
FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA 23901

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DONG-DING—LONGWOOD SPRING

GYRE

East from Longwood Spring
Piercing pain to the pain
Catcher in the Rye

A little part of my life
A little part of my life
A little part of my life
A little part of my life

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A little part of my life

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SPRING 1969

LONGWOOD COLLEGE

FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA

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Longwood



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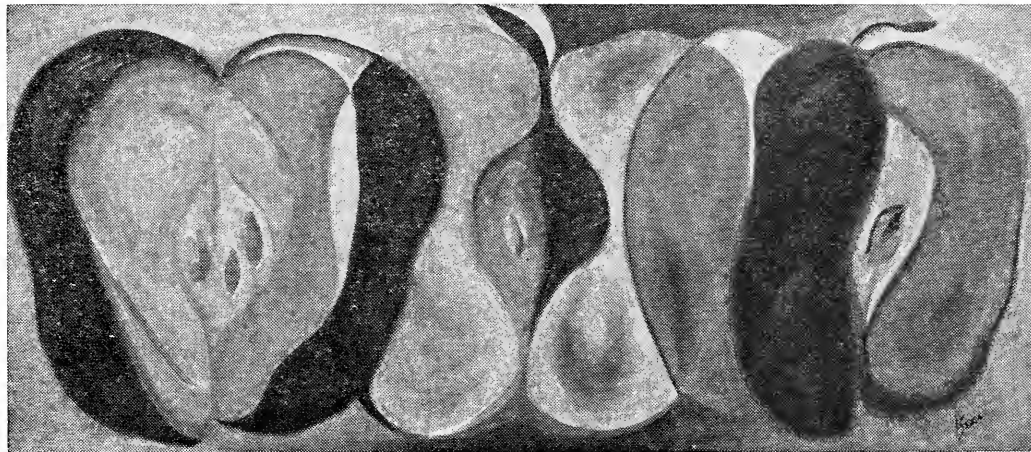
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FROM THE EDITOR

This is the **Gyre's** annual Spring Contest Issue. On behalf of the staff, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners and thank all those who submitted work for this issue. In addition, a special thanks goes to this year's judges: Becky Bartholomew, Marilyn Bates, Mr. Eyster, Miss Fritsche, Dr. Hooker, Miss Huffman, Mr. Pyle, and Miss Ross.

A few weeks ago, I was notified that the **Gyre** received again this year a First Class rating from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. It is both pleasing and surprising that a small-college magazine such as the **Gyre** is able to compete so successfully each year with magazines from such larger schools as Ohio State University and Northwestern University. I hope that you, the student body, will recognize that this award indicates that we do have good writers on campus, and that it will

prompt you to continue to write and submit to the campus magazine. Students often tell me that they do not submit their works because they feel the works are not good enough or because they fear being "laughed at" by the staff. In a small college such as ours it is important that every girl who feels she has something to contribute to the magazine submit her works. Otherwise, it is impossible to get a valid sampling of the ideas of the student body. Even if a student is not a very good grammarian when her ideas are interesting, it is often possible to retain her work after a slight bit of editing. The **Gyre** staff does not "laugh at" the material it receives, but it does enjoys reading the works and hopes that next fall more of you will begin submitting articles.

J. C. H.

THE SHELTER

I had often read about people who were innocent of certain crimes being sent to prison anyway, and I felt sorry for them. But that was all I felt until I joined their ranks. My crime was not that of murder or robbery, but that of having a nutty father. What made my father nuttier than most men was his obsession about the bomb and fallout. As a result of this, we were the only family in our town with a fallout shelter.

It was sort of a gag at first when Dad started making plans, but when he had that stupid hole dug in the backyard, we knew that he was serious. The neighbors had a picnic laughing when the cinderblocks were brought in from the store downtown. The only people who were not bent double from laughing were the men who were building it. At least they seemed to be quite serious while they were working, but I always felt that they probably went into hysterics each evening when they went home from work. Father must have paid half the price of our house for that hole in the ground. I was totally innocent. I did not want that fallout shelter any more than I wanted a broken leg; however, I still ended up in prison. My prison was the fallout shelter.

It all started one Saturday afternoon when our neighbor came flying in the backdoor screaming that the Russians had just bombed Washington and begged us to let him and his family into our shelter. I couldn't believe my ears. I wanted to know all the details—where he had heard the news, how he knew that it was valid, etc.; but Dad would not let me find out anything. Instead he hustled the family off to the shelter

★ SECOND PLACE—SHORT STORY

and told our neighbor to take his family downtown to the temporary shelter that was in the school basement.

That began my life in prison. Daddy hurried us into the shelter, closed and bolted the door, and we all sat down and began the long stare. After a few hours (that is, if they were hours; they seemed more like days or weeks), Dad tried the radio to find out how things were. But in all his hurry, he had forgotten the batteries. So we were trapped in silence with absolutely no contact with the outside world.

It was not really bad for the first week or so, except for the noise of the twins quarreling, but then, the twins always got on my nerves after a few hours. During that time I read all the books that Dad had furnished and worked all the crossword puzzles in the papers.

After that the days all seemed to be a week long—for me anyway. The rest of the family seemed to make out just fine. The twins played and fought accordingly, just as always. Mother seemed oblivious to the whole situation. She remained herself through the whole ordeal. She straightened the Hole just as if it were our living room at home, and she played games with the twins. She even made a game out of eating that horrible canned food we had stored in the shelter. I got so sick of her stupid games I wanted to scream, and scream I did on several occasions. Dad spent all of his time reading his precious fallout manuals. When he wasn't reading, he was making charts and trying to figure out just when it would be safe for us to get out of the shelter and return home.

On several occasions we held conferences on what day it was, what the condition of the atmosphere and earth was, and when we could safely return. During these meetings I was evidently irrational because after awhile the meetings stopped, and Mother and Dad talked in whispers most of the time.

The day that I remember most began just as any other day. By noon I was at wit's end with everything and everybody. After I screamed at the twins for popping bubble gum, Mother looked at Dad and he called me over to talk to them. Dad said, "Anne, dear, your mother and I have talked about leaving several times, but we are not quite sure whether or not it is safe yet. One of us will have to go out and find out if it is safe or not. If it is okay on the outside for us to return then that person can come back and get the rest of the family. If the person does not return, then those who are left in the shelter will remain in the shelter. Darling, you seem so impatient to get out, maybe you would like to go out and see if it is all right for us to bring the twins out. You seem so despondent, and we know how you hate being cooped up in here with the twins."

"How transparent can you be?" I thought. "All you can think about are those precious twins of yours and yourselves. Well, I will leave and go outside but not to be noble . . . just to get out of this hole." With those thoughts my obsession to get out of the shelter got the better of me. I accepted the position of going first. All I could think about was seeing daylight or whatever it was again.

I had second thoughts about the situation while in the

tunnel between the shelter and the outside door. I thought of dying, but then I thought of the horror of returning to the shelter and of returning without knowing whether everything had been destroyed or whether any of our neighbors were alive. I continued the trudge forward toward possible death, for even in death at least there would be a freedom from the horrors of the Hole.

I prayed before I opened the door. That is unusual for me, but then I was not myself just at that time. Somehow, though, I got the courage to open the door. I remember planning to hold my breath and being ready, if necessary, to close the door hastily. I'm not sure what I expected to find. I readied my system to be revolted by the sight of charred trees and little, if any, sign of life since none of the neighbors had had shelters.

When I opened the door, I almost fainted. The sunlight seemed incredibly bright. Then I realized that it was summertime and our nextdoor neighbor was fixing the rubber swimming pool for his children. After I finally got hold of myself, I walked over to our fence and looked around into the neighborhood that I had not seen in so long. That was when Joe saw me. He dropped the pool and ran over to the fence.

"My, but it is good to see you, Anne," he said as he hugged me. "We sure have missed you all. I came over to see you and apologize for playing that joke on you about Washington being bombed, but you were all gone. Did Paul take his vacation sooner than he had expected?"

"So this was what happened," I thought. "All the days we



spent in that hole were a result of a practical joke and we could not find out any differently because of a stupid broken radio." Now I really was angry with my father for putting me through all those days of torture. He and that idiotic fallout shelter would be cursed until my dying day. Then it occurred to me that I could even the score. I could pay my father back for having made my life miserable. "I'll fix them," I thought, "for making me their guinea pig."

I turned to Joe and said, "I am sorry we left without telling you or anyone, but Dad got his vacation moved up because he's being transferred to the main office in New York. We had to leave hurriedly so we could use part of our time to find an apartment. I have just come home to get some more of our things."

"Is the house going up for sale?"

"Oh, no. I don't think the transfer is permanent."

I then rushed into the house and packed my clothes. After that I went downtown to the bank, drew out part of my savings and made reservations at a beach resort. I decided to use father's car, since he wouldn't be needing it—not for a while anyway.

Lying on the beach, listening to the radio, I often think about the twins and wonder if they are still blowing bubbles and playing games, or if they finally ran out of gum and games to play. And sometimes I think of Mother and Dad and wonder if they are still cleaning and working charts. Sometimes I feel guilty, just for a moment; but then I remember how Father sent me to what he must have considered my doom. . . . Oh, this gorgeous Florida sunshine!

Salli Akers

Quietly

like the sun's first whisper
when dawn stretches out
across the waking earth . . .
All warm and glowing,

Friendship

settles in the heart . . .
becomes a treasure, shared . . .
Of autumn sunsets, laughter,
dreamy first snow of winter,
letters teared with sorrow and joy,
silver secrets, red carnations . . .
Giddy, gilded happiness,
simple, solemn quietude of care

Comes

streaming like spring sunlight . . .
A Friend
Paints rainbows with your tears.

JOYOUS

Scratch the sky and claw
Like rakes, you crooked twigs.
Rip the gray dome of winter wide.
Stretch against the bleak cirrus clouds
Like skeletal fingers that reach for bread.
I know you, the barren, the beaten,
The bare and twisted arms of naked bark;
And I hear you in that howl,
That rackling, plaintive cry.
For I, too, in this tundra seek my spring.

Linda Long

Smooth as the silent sea at sundown
Soft as a snow-white kitten,
Smiling a grin so bright
Gleaming with happy eyes,
Happy as an innocent child,

Love dwells hidden in deep abyss
quiet as a secret spring
below the sleeping town
A peaceful niche in the screaming wails
Of Life.

Leslie Sedgwick

★ SECOND PLACE—ESSAY

MY HOMETOWN

A hometown is yours only for that time in which you merge your youth with its activity. For most people it is a transient thing, taking its place for the greater part of their lives in the files of memory. Not a geographic entity—a hometown is real only in terms of people, places, and time.

My hometown, like yours, began to disappear the day I left. I have been back to look for it, and all the signs say I took the right road; but the faces and places deny the maps and markers. It is as alien as any small town through which one travels on his way to the big cities.

I can still board the downtown bus at my old stop; but the driver no longer bears a familiar face—and instead of greeting me as his customary passenger, he simply requests that I deposit another nickel—the fare is up to twenty cents now.

Downtown is not the same either. Because of the interest of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, freshly reconstructed pre-Civil War buildings line the "wrong" end of Sycamore Street, where in my time these same buildings had comfortably degenerated into the Corine Hotel and the Busy Bee Restaurant—a honky-tonk haven for hoboes and numbers men.

On Saturday afternoons well-dressed ladies and their daughters are no longer to be seen shopping at the once more respectable end of Sycamore. Each store which formerly drew their trade now has a branch in the suburban shopping mall. The ladies and their daughters prefer to shop with comfortable ease in the antiseptic atmosphere of the mall where they pass unhindered by "walk" and "don't walk" signs shielded from the weather.

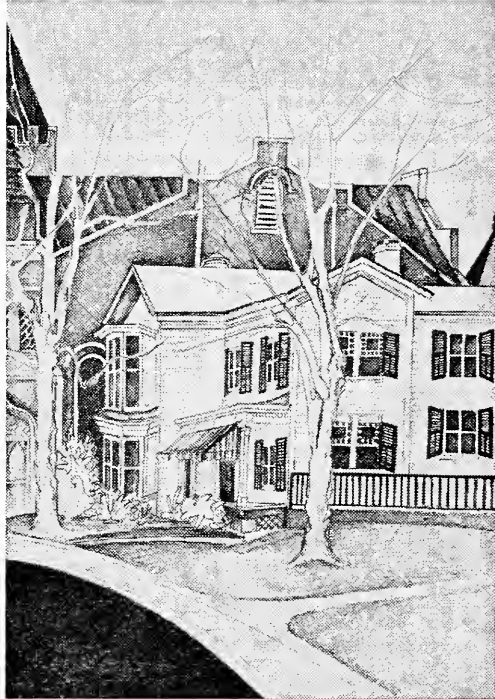
After the Friday night football game the kids no longer swarm to the Rainbow Drive-In where Tony the cook knew them all by name and could recite their orders before they ever reached the counter. They now drive five miles further to the new Shoney's where they dictate their orders to awkward steel intercoms which respond with static to the push of a button. Shoney's doesn't reward the player who scored the winning touchdown with all the Bigger-Burgers he can eat as Tony once did, but if the hero is lucky the machine might remember to leave the slaw off his Slim Jim.

If you happen to be around on a Sunday, you will notice that the American Legion baseball games are not the same either. The chief of police who coached the state champions for so many years no longer occupies his familiar position in the dugout. Also you will find that it doesn't mean quite as much when that stocky kid in the dirty uniform steals third as it did when Bobby Taylor took a base.

If you venture out to the edge of town where we used to ride horses and ice skate, you will find that neither is possible now. The hill that was the best to gallop down is now a select home sight; and the pond that was inaccessible without a tromp through the woods has now been filled in at the request of homeowners who found mosquitoes unbearably offensive.

A new generation has rebuilt my hometown, and in their efforts to modernize and improve it, they have stolen it from me. Their hometown is the product of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, shopping malls, electronic restaurants, and green acres bulldozed into brick homes. However, years from now when they follow all the maps and markers to their hometown, they will find that it, too, has disappeared.

Catherine Leary



GONE

Did you see the old house they are tearing down across the street? It's kind of sad. Those walls once so tough and sturdy are shattered now—leaving nothing but a collection of plaster and one big empty room. The stairway that led people up and down their lives is gone, too. I wonder about the number of feet—large, medium, and small—which have used those stairs and all the reasons why.

There must have been children in the house at some time. I'll bet they sat on the porch telling ghost stories on hot summer nights. You can hardly tell that the muddy area was once a porch, but I know it was. If there were children, there must have been a nursery—with a cradle. Where is the floor on which the cradle rocked, and on which the mother's feet tiptoed softly?

All that broken glass probably means that there were lots of windows to let in the sun, keep out the rain, and bring in fresh air. The air is all so dusty now, though—all that plaster. . . .

Barbara Leahey



★ FIRST PLACE—ESSAY

THE FARMER'S MARKET

One of the disappearing aspects of the American scene is the Farmer's Market. An institution which burgeoned during the days of horse and buggy and which held its own as a place of trade after the emergence of the automobile, it has become, in the days of cash and carry, a used and useless commodity.

The Farmer's Market has changed. Changed in atmosphere, changed in sight and sound and smell. Even the name is different—the City Market is the official title applied to the square of health-regulated, city inspected, Chamber of Commerce-approved stores and stalls which very few people visit nowadays. An oldtimer wouldn't recognize the square. Where homemade stands once displayed the farmer's produce and wares, magazine racks and newsstands display the latest headlines: **Modern Screen** teems with the latest gossip from Hollywood, and Batman comic books offer the newest adventure of the Caped Crusader. Restaurants have taken over the square, and at night their blinking red and green neon signs announce the City Diner or Market Lunch.

A degeneration has spread over the market. Buildings which once housed businesses are sham hotels. Most of the merchants have left the area; the ghosts of once-prosperous businesses hang over the City Rescue Mission and second-hand "bargain stores."

The people have changed, too. At one time in the market square, the classes mixed. They stood side by side and quibbled over the price of the same pound of butter or the same quart of honey or the same pork chops. People once came to the marketplace to bargain and to haggle, to buy and to sell. Most of those who come today wander aimlessly through the square or stand idly on a corner.

The most remarkable change is in the sights and the sounds and the smells of the place. The market has moved indoors. Very few products are displayed the old way—sidewalk style. It was once possible to see truckbeds filled with round, ripe cantaloupes, or coarse brown sacks of light green, veined ears of corn. Small cartons held freckled strawberries, bunches of deep-purple grapes, button-sized blueberries and waxy yellow cherries. Flowers were also in abundance. Depending upon the time of the year, a shopper could find the purple and yellow faces of pansies or dazzling

golden jonquils or, in the autumn, stiff, brown cattails—so brittle that if you touched them their stems would collapse and their elongated heads would shatter into thousands of infinitesimal seeds.

Today, though it is still possible to buy some of these items, they will probably be sold from a shelf or over a counter; and they will be packaged. In the "new" market, cellophane and plastic containers have taken the touching and smelling out of shopping.

The smell of the market is gone. Passers-by once stopped to inhale the aroma of fresh-baked bread, the stinging or mellow odors of cheese, the nose-curling smell of fish; but the odors, like the touching, have been taken from the market. The "smelly" products have either been removed from the stalls or hermetically sealed or frozen or dried.

The marketplace has changed, in a surprisingly short time, from an area of feverish movement to an area of little activity. The mood, the quality, the temper of the buyers and the sellers—everything is different. The old Farmer's Market has evolved into the "modern" City Market and is on its way to oblivion.



Gwyn Muse

THE GUEST

That paradox loneliness,
That we be least alone,
Encounter with one's self becomes
Most interfering social;
The conversation topic be,
Play a stranger's game,
Exchange bare, bright illusion,
Grasp more the same;

Suppose I play a trick,
To trip the shadow's pose,
And turn around—catch her black,
And shout: "No!"
She simply slips beneath
My fastened, nailed fist,
Slyly whispers her "regrets,"
And slips through silent space;

But leave she me alone?
Her sporting never cease,
Interrogation, acknowledgement—she deem her
right demand,
No escape no outlet,
From her persistent plan;

And should I want to leave,
Ungracious Hostess—
Violate hostile hospitality?
Find she won't be rid,
Nor run, nor resisted,
Voiceless voices pervade her pretty party,
And so I must dress in costly charm,
And ask her leave to stay.

Virginia Robertson

Catherine Leary

April 5, 1969

Dear A'nt Livy,

I know its been a spell since you heard from me last, but things here 's been pretty quiet and there ain't been much news worth troublin' the mailman with. Some's come up here lately though that's got all uh Nazarene County astir.

You 'member young Junie Taylor—Joe and Marian's boy—well I know you recollect him 'cause I can recall hearin' you tell one time 'bout years ago, when he was in your Sunday school class down at Nazarene Church of the Savior, how he was all the time answerin' out and sayin' such strange things for a youngun' his age. You said if you was any kinda judge uh character, that boy'd never come to no good—and A'nt

Livy, in light uh the goin' ons here lately, you shown yourself to be a pretty wise woman.

Well, after you left here for Columbia, young Junie just sprouted on up. Got so's he was a right big help to his pa down at Joe's fillin' station. Seemed like an ideal son—even helpin' Marian out with the chores and all; but he kept to himself a good deal, spent more time than the average young fellas 'roun' church, and never took much notice uh the girls. Folks started wonderin' 'bout his strange ways. Got so's it seemed like he was always talkin' in riddles, and if you was to ask him anything, likely as not, you'd get a question back for an answer.

Spendin' all that time 'roun' church like he was, here a month o' two back Junie took to preachin' on his own. He won't preachin' in the church though; he was givin' his sermons out in the fields and down by the river. He won't preach the Good Book like folks 'roun' here 's been raised on neither—no, Junie was preachin' 'bout lovin' niggers, an' world peace, an' just all grades uh stuff folks here 'bouts

ain't used to hearin'. He even started claimin' he had 'vangelical powers just like them TV healers and crackpots.

It got so's Junie was drawin' a pretty fair size crowd. Even had a bus load come in from Selma, and another clear from Birmingham just to hear this bull he was spreadin'. Got so's decent people couldn't walk down the main street uh town without meeting some uppety foreign nigger who didn't know his place or else some crazy cripple out huntin' for Junie to heal him.

Junie was gettin'a lotta folks all afire with his fool preachin' and things was gettin' pretty unsettled. Him talkin' nigger lovin' an' communism like he was, ain't no wonder the town leaders would eventually have to do their duty. Well, just last week it come to the point where things looked like they just might blow up. So Raph Johnson, he's sheriff now, Kyle Potter, Billie Jo Butler, Deacon Simpkins, an' all the fellas from 'roun' at the court house got together for a kind of a little committee meeting, jus' to see what oughta be done. I reckon good as not you know what the outcome of that was—late this afternoon they found ole Junie hangin' from the telephone pole up atop Calvin's Hill.

I kinda wonder if he sensed what was comin' on 'cause I heard Stoney Goodson and some of the other boys that stuck right close to Junie talkin' this evenin' 'bout how strange he'd been actin' when he came in to eat supper at the diner with 'em last night. Stoney said soon as they was done eatin' Junie'd headed out tow'rd the orchard alone, said he had some things on his mind he wanted to get thought out.

Well, I guess that's just 'bout all I got to say, A'nt Livy, 'ceptin' you certainly was a smart one to spot all this trouble such a good while back. I think everyone here kinda feels a little sorry for ole Junie. They know he meant well, but decent folks jus' can't be 'spected to sit by and let some maniac go on threatenin' the security of a peace loving, Christian place like Nazarene.

Your Nephew,
Luke

P. S.

A big storm come up early this evenin' and right now its jus' lightnin' and thunderin' like the world was comin' to an end. I hope to goodness it lets up 'fore tomorrow. Easter's always a big day 'roun' here, and an awful lotta folks 's gonna be mighty disappointed if they don't get to wear their new spring outfits 'roun' church in the mornin'.



YOU

i remember the first time i saw YOU
YOU were standing against the sun's blinding rays
with the white foam circling YOUR feet
YOU were close then, but oh-so distant
but soon we became always just close
just YOU and i
it wasn't long ago
no—not so very long ago
when YOU and i ran down the beach
the sandpipers were always running
down to the sea and back—down to the sea and back
intent on their everyday business
the tiny creatures would peep out from their holes
just to watch us
sing and talk—dance and walk
we were young then
YOU loved me—i loved YOU

hot summer days melted into cool windy nights
days passed and weeks became months
but YOU and i took no notice whatsoever
the long hot days became shorter and cooler
and the short cool nights became longer and colder
our hellos became one l o n g goodbye
YOU said we would always stay close
i just listened and silently cried
winter came and passed with spring not far behind
i waited so l o n g—so long to say hello again
but there is no second spring, no second summer
for love grown cold with winter
i remember YOU—against the sun's blinding rays
YOU with the white foam circling YOUR feet
YOU and the sandpipers—YOU and the tiny creatures
YOU and the heat of the summer
YOU and always—just—YOU.

Gwen Robinson



★ HONORABLE MENTION— SHORT STORY

MICKIE CRIGLER WAS HERE

The pier was deserted. It stood out as the only man-made object along the shoreline. A feeling of solitude was displayed in its long, jutting body which rested against the dirty, gray afternoon sky. Looking at it from a certain angle, one would think that it was a line drawn horizontally, separating the waters from the heavens. Also, from far away, one might wonder if its planks ever ended. Barnacles were clinging to its long wooden poles, against which small waves splashed. Now and then, a big jellyfish with a seemingly white four-leaf clover on its back drifted near. The gulls flying overhead made tiny silhouettes against the afternoon sunset.

One of the less pleasant sounds was that of waves hitting systematically against the shoreline. At intervals the hollow sound reverberated, as if to illustrate the passage of time like the ticking of a universal clock. Little grains of sand joined with each receding wave; and then, within seconds, they washed upon the shore again. This endless cycle paralleled

that of the little sandpipers on the beach. They would creep up to the ocean, and with each wave's splash, they would run fiercely back ashore. The water was teasing them in a rather unmerciful way. After several minutes, the little creatures became exhausted and ran to a dryer spot to rest.

The sky had grown an even darker gray; and as soon as the last hint of sunlight was erased, nature took on a dreary appearance. The late September leaves rustled as if they hoped to supply some sound besides that of the lonely sea and gulls; however, the competition was too great. Along the shoreline was much debris. Fish, whose glassy, stone eyes peered into empty space, were lying about three or four feet apart. In one spot, an eel joined this marine morgue. As far as one could see, this string of decadence continued. Hundreds of flies had begun their devouring process, and they drifted from one tasty object to another. It was their orgy.

Some remains of human activity also cluttered the beach near the wooded area. Part of the rim of a can jutted out of the sand where it had been wind-buried. Cellophane wrappers that had become soggy with moisture clung to the sand; and, in one spot, a pile of wood was covered by ashes. Several long wire objects which were obviously former closet

fixtures were scattered about. Despite these objects, the wooded area seemed a separate entity from the immediate shoreline.

The only intruder was a sixteen-year-old boy. From the west, his small figure was advancing towards the pier. Clad in a navy blue parka, he pressed his folded arms against his chest so as to ward off the late afternoon breeze. His tan khaki pants were wet to the knees, and he was barefooted. His auburn hair tousled, and he squinted when it got into his eyes. Occasionally, he would wind in and out of the dead fish, avoiding them. He did not want to interrupt nature even in the slightest matter.

Mickie Crigler blended in well with the atmosphere of the deserted beach. His face reflected grayness and doom, and his eyes had a very hollow appearance with a similarity to two, small, dark discs. His coloring was rather drab; and, for a boy of his age, he walked very slowly. One might describe his actions as mechanical, as if some invisible force were doing them for him. His head was lowered, and his eyes were focused on the dark sand resting underneath his long toenails. Although he watched his feet as they dug into the soft earth beneath, his stare was without real meaning.

Then Mickie walked up to a dead fish and as he came within inches of it, he stopped. Squatting down slowly, he surveyed the fish for several minutes. A fascination seemed to seize the boy as he reached for the inanimate form. Mickie caressed the fish in his hands and rolled it over and over. He felt its fins. He touched the dry tail fin and was surprised

with its thinness. He stared into the fish's cold and glassy eyes. His forefinger outlined the fish's rough mouth. Then Mickie put the fish aside and dug a hole in the soft sand. He took the little fish and lowered him down into the hole. He covered the hole back up with the sand and smoothed the spot with the back of his hand. The fish seemed, now, never to have been.

Getting up, Mickie began his lonely, yet satisfied, trek down the beach. After a few silent moments, he began to kick the sand with the ball of his right foot as he proceeded along. The lifted sand's direction seemed as undecided and shiftless as his own. Just as each sand particle settled again on the beach, down the narrow foot went to lift others. Soon, an eel obstructed the way. Mickie dug his foot down into the sand directly under the eel, and kicked it out of his way. The elongated body just plopped down, as lifeless as before, on the sand. The outside force had not generated any real activity in the limp form. Mickie scooped up sand and began caking it on the eel's body, patting it hard so that the moistness made the sand stick together. Digging a narrow hole, he buried the eel in the same way he had buried the fish. His pilgrimage began once again.

He picked up some speed, and began winding in and out of the string of dead fish as he had done earlier. Again he was careful not to step on any of the small corpses, but then he made a movement too quickly and stepped heavily on the side of a fish newly washed ashore. He stopped abruptly and squatted on his knees. He saw an oozing from the vic-

tim's mouth. The substance was gray and green and very slimy. Feeling nausea, Mickie grabbed the rotting fish and threw it out to sea with all his might; however, the fish plopped in the water only a few feet offshore. Mickie sat down on the wet sand. He wept softly. He brought his hands up to his face. They were sticky. They had the smell of rotting fish. Some sand rested in the creases in between his fingers. He didn't care. The smell no longer offended him. He had no need to fear its contamination. He wiped his moist eyes with the smelling hands, and he ran them through his hair.

As quickly as he had sat down, he rose and walked to the wooded area. He heard the gulls; and also, he heard the rustling of the leaves. A decaying log was lying nearby. Mickie sat down on its end. Within a few feet of him, scores of flies were devouring a huge beach insect. The bug was on its back, and Mickie wondered how the bug, even in death, could tolerate the desecration of its body by such a hideous industry. He grabbed a stick nearby and slammed it down on the sand near the buzzing activity. Many flies flew away, but a few of the braver and more gluttonous still remained. Mickie threw sand on those, and they struggled, then flew up near his head as if to reproach the intruder. However, by now, Mickie didn't care since he was lying across the log on his stomach and was very intent on drawing something in the sand with his forefinger. He drew a huge number "6." Then he erased it quickly with the side of his hand. He wrote his name in the same spot, and he inscribed below it the words "was here."

Seeming rather disturbed, the boy got up and walked straight down to the water. He waded in. When the water level had reached his knees, he began walking further down the beach. The pier was his goal.

As soon as he reached the pier, he surveyed the first two poles with their barnacles attached. He wanted to look at the next pole, but where it stood the water was too deep. Then he looked to the sandy beach and saw several shells. Getting out of the water, he came near the shells and stooped over and picked up exactly six in number.

With these shells, Mickie climbed up on the pier. He walked carefully, since a few of the boards had parts of them missing. He finally got to the end, and sat down. After placing the shells on the board beside him, he looked down into the green water and noticed a jellyfish drifting by. The boy was always fascinated by the contracting of the creature's body while breathing. He stared a long while. Then his attention centered upon his shells and he arranged them in order according to size. Next, he took the smallest shell in his left hand and threw it out to the sea. This was done to each successive shell. When he had gotten to the last and largest shell, he stood up on the pier and threw it out in the direction of the sunset.

It was getting much darker now. Lavender and pink and crimson shades were in the sky, and they were swiftly disappearing into the blackening abyss. The breeze had gotten much heavier, and Mickie now zipped up his parka. He was growing very uncomfortable. The cool wetness of the air

made his pants legs cling to him. He made small circles in the air with his dangling feet. He wished he now had brought his loafers. They were warm, but they were also new. Shame.

The gulls had just about disappeared from the sky. The water made ripples where the heavy breeze impressed upon it. No sign of life was stirring now. Even the flies had quit their activity and had gone to find shelter. Pretty soon they would be seen no more on the beach. Mickie felt that he was an almighty looking down on an earth after a destroying force had hit. He did not enjoy that feeling. He decided to go home.

When he reached the shore, he walked more swiftly than he had before, and soon his navy parka became indiscernible. He grew smaller and smaller, and the black sky enveloped him. Mickie Crigler, a leukemia victim with six months to live, would return again the next day.

Brenda Holly

★ HONORABLE MENTION—POETRY

WHERE IS GOD?

Where is God?

I hunted in the church.
Flowered ladies, hat-conscious, sinfully proud,
Looking down sharp noses at youth.
Vanity is their god.

I hunted in my room.
Books jump out at me, people call me,
"Music" shatters and routs prayer.
Nothing is god here.

I hunted in the valley,
On the mountains, under trees, in the fields.
Something I found in the song of the sparrow
Singing his heart out on a sun-spangled morning;
In the dew-drenched bluegrass, cool beneath my feet
As I follow a rainbow. Something I found
In the face of a friend—is it love?
Is it God?

Jenny Young

The Fixer by Bernard Malamud;
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York; 1966.

One of the most widely acclaimed books of the past decade is Bernard Malamud's **The Fixer**. It was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1967 and has recently been released as a motion picture by MGM.

The Fixer is a powerful book about a man who transcends the anti-semitic Russia of fifty years ago. The story provides an intense emotional and intellectual experience, clearly detailing the threats to personal freedom which may result from ignorance, prejudice, and injustice.

Malamud, being a Jew, presents Judaism as he knows and understands it. Although he associates suffering with the Jew, he has gone beyond any sectarian prejudice in showing that suffering is the fate of all mankind. Malamud does not idealize suffering. Suffering is not what one is looking for but what one is likely to get. This idea is basic to the major theme and character of **The Fixer**.

Yakov Bok, the fixer, is a Jew and a freethinker who does not believe in God. He is an ordinary man, poor and self-educated, who becomes a symbol of suffering and injustice. Bok is an innocent man, the victim of ignorance, prejudice, and inhumanity. More important, he is a victim of history and his time.

Bok goes to Kiev during a turbulent period of anti-Semitism in Tsarist Russia in the first decade of the 20th century. He is charged with the murder of a Christian boy and is sent to prison to await trial. There he is humiliated and degraded by

lies and false charges of the state as it attempts to make him confess to the crime.

With a Jewish identity that he could neither fully claim nor completely refute, Bok stepped into history and the consequent web of events surrounding the persecution of Russian Jews. A whole society was against him simply because he was a Jew. The Czar believed that men were best unified by hate; therefore, the Jews were blamed for the troubles of the corrupt state of Russia. One man was all the state needed—a man to hold up as an example of Jewish criminality. Bok unwittingly became the Tsar's adversary. The Russian state denied him the most elemental justice. He was starved, poisoned, degraded, humiliated, and chained like an animal during two years of imprisonment.

Bok did not understand what was happening in the beginning. Only after harsh imprisonment did he begin to realize what the state was trying to do. He became a hero to the Jewish people. Bok went to Kiev with no political commitment, but his experience in prison taught him that life itself must be a commitment. He would not confess to a lie which would incriminate the Jews and cause even more hatred and persecution. Bok saw no future, but he was determined to go to trial and confirm his innocence. He believed that "where there's no fight for it, there is no freedom." He fought a heroic struggle, and his will not to be destroyed by the tyranny, hate, and prejudice of a corrupt state brought him finally to trial.

Sharon Brown



★ FIRST PLACE—POETRY

WINTER

Winter, who has stolen skillfully o'er the land
And draped its figure in some cold delight,
How swift the fall of Autumn in one night
Beneath thy chill and northswept hand.
A myriad of thy flakes compound to might
And bury umber Autumn deep.
O Winter, such magic in thy lullaby must be
To blanket beauty in this bedded white we see,
That Spring some compelling antidote must keep
To warm thy grasp and set us free.
Winter, so come thou upon the harvest scene,
And in thy blast our cheeks first with welcome glow,
'Til time, in white, wears thin the memory green,
And we thy frozen face soon bid to go.

Linda Long

★ HONORABLE MENTION—POETRY

FEATHER RAIN

A deep silence befell the waking world,
The thickly-falling snowflakes muffled sound,
Pale stains of smoke arose from chimneys, curled
And spelled a message to all around.

The peering faces of children beam with joy,
Their shrieks and laughter soon shall split the air
And will the busy grown-ups' minds annoy;
To them, no fun is snow; they do not care.

The feathering rain is a curtain,
And shrouds the earth in robes of dazzling white.
The beauty of nature arrays the land, but when
Will men perceive her beauty or see her light?

By now, the angels tire of pillow fun,
And so to clean up they send out the sun.

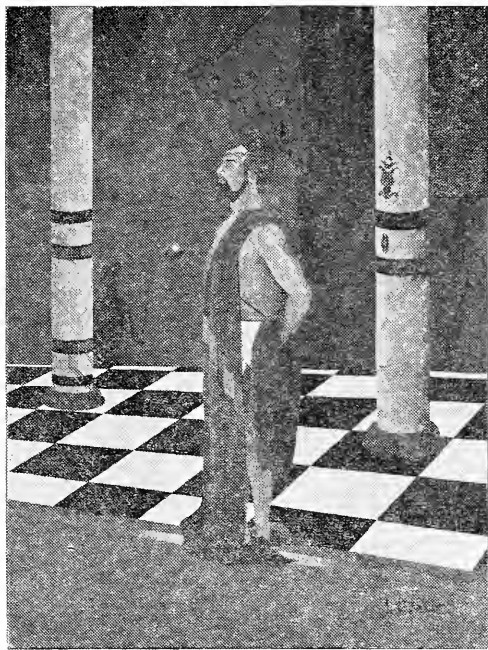
Patti Coogan

DIAMOND PERSONALITY

Everyone knows what a diamond is like. It is the hardest substance on earth and looks as cold as it is hard. Yet in the clear, frigid depths flash points of icy fire, blue-white in a perfect stone, red and green in a flawed one. The flaws add life and color to the dead white brilliance. As the glitter cuts into the eye, the diamond itself will cut all lesser stones, precious, semi-precious, or common, but cannot be cut in turn. It is impervious to marring and molding, but it can be shattered and so destroyed completely.

There is an unemotional person whose personality is hard and cold. Through this deceptive surface, the inner fires gleam up through layers of icy reserve, and the cool sparks are given off as witty remarks. Often these remarks are directed with cutting sarcasm at the all too sensitive humans nearby. This hard person cannot feel pain from similar remarks directed at him. Any such attempt to hurt or change him will fail. Like a diamond, he can be destroyed only by an expert who knows how to apply force at exactly the right point—a flaw.

Paula Bailey



RAINDROP WATCHER'S WEEKLY

It has been brought to the attention of the Longwood Rain-drop Watcher's Club that there has been no rain for a distressingly long time. Granted, we have kept the sun from shining on several occasions, but the average cellar-water level is down to one foot, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches now, and people are demanding to know what is happening. Water rats are becoming scarce; ducks are taking to the river more, instead of staying in their owner's back yard. We can hardly blame them. What self-respecting duck would swim in two inches of water? Fortunately the frogs are still numerous, the average family having at least five full-grown frogs serenading them in the evenings.

It is rumored that the Raindrop Watchers will give the town twenty weeping willows to line the streets. This is absolutely NOT TRUE!! Such trees cannot be beautiful with week-long droughts between rains. However, we have considered giving rain wear to several of the needy families in the area. **They** won't die off if one out of four weeks is dry.

Our readers may be interested to know that the Sunnyside Swimming Pool Company has closed up and left town. It's about time. Who needs swimming pools when you've got a basement? This way you don't even pay for filling it. Incidentally, Farmville may have the lowest average water bill in Virginia. Have you noticed all the rain barrels?

★ HONORABLE MENTION—ESSAY

SURREALISM

Surrealism is a disjointed foot sitting among trees in a forest. It's a man with an umbrella reproduced a hundred times on a piece of canvas, or a crowd of people staring out at you, separated from each other by soundproofed walls. It's an elephant slowly walking across a field of fingers.

Surrealism is defined as a French movement in art and literature that tries to express the subconscious through fantastic or incongruous imagery. In simpler terms, surrealist art or literature shows hidden thoughts of the artist by weird combinations of everyday objects. Objects that have no real significance in our everyday world take on a whole new interpretation. The ordinary foot becomes a gigantic, imaginary citadel and a finger becomes a blade of grass.

Surrealism is not realism, as close as the two words may sound. Realism is an art form which presents life as it is or as artists consciously see it. Surrealism, on the other hand, presents life as the artist imagines it—with monstrous additions or duplications. Realism is alleys, busy streets, hard-worked faces. Surrealism is alleys made of giants' mouths, deserted streets with one tremendous eye overlooking them. Realistic faces have photographic accuracy of detail; surrealist faces are blank and show time not in wrinkles, but by a mummy's mask.

Louise Dougherty

The Longwood Canoe Club is sponsoring a canoe trip along the general vicinity of the Appomattox River this Sunday. It is hoped that the water will be low enough so canoeists will not risk bumping their heads on low bridges along the way. During last week's flood, one Watcher discovered, much to his horror, that the goldfish in his back yard had escaped. He has requested the return of any stray veiltails and "telescopes" that may be found, so please check your yards, folks.

So many of you have written in with mildew problems that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare is sending two mildew specialists, who will be on hand for counseling this Friday and Saturday from 9:00 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 5:00. We hope many of you will take advantage of this opportunity.

Jenny Young

